2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

'belonging', and to a certain extent has created for them a community of their own. These persons often make up the hard core of Labour supporters in their villages, since they have nothing to lose by openly fighting the Church.

A number of sociological explanations can be advanced to account for the support professionals, white-collar workers and farmers give to the Church. First of all, professionals generally lose status in the eyes of their colleagues, if not the wider society, if they join the Labour Party or sympathize with it. It is a working-class party, and they are professionals. There are a number of notable exceptions to this, but the only professionals that I met who sympathized with the MLP were either candidates for office with it or members of the Executive. The political ideology of their colleagues and the expectations of their clients combine to make them look upon the Labour Party as the antithesis of everything they have been brought up to believe in. They, through their offices in parish associations and through their work as doctors, lawyers, high civil servants, and so on, form part of the establishment to which the Labour Party is opposed.

Much the same reasoning can be applied to the white-collar workers. As teachers, clerks and other intermediate grade civil servants they hold a relatively high position in the social hierarchy of their villages. Many are anxious to identify themselves with their social superiors, those in control of the village as well as their employers, and thus look down upon the MLP as opposed to their interests. Moreover most of them have been educated at colleges run by the Church. There their teachers gave them additional religious instruction and strengthened those values which make the anti-clerical tone of the Labour Party repugnant to them.

Farmers, on the other hand, are looked down upon by many and are regarded as underprivileged by all. Why is it then that they do not support the Labour Party? Farmers in most communities are very conservative, and those in Malta are no exception. Their solitary occupation isolates them from the Labour Party ideology which is so freely discussed among the industrial workers of Malta. Not only that, but as we have seen, they are among the most poorly educated section of the community. Many are unable to read the propaganda which the MLP disseminates through its publications. This isolation from the secular and materialistic ideologies which enter the country through the

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6

CHAPTER XVIII

Old Survivals in Modern Malta

MALTA OCCUPIES A PLACE OF ITS OWN IN THE OLD WORLD not only by reason of the length and unusual character of its annals, not only by reason of the tremendous range of its architectural monuments. It does so because it combines with these features the circumstance that it is the home of a separate race, the smallest of European peoples.

There are, it is true, four independent states in Europe of lesser size than Malta, but the inhabitants of these states do not form distinct racial stocks, nor have they their own languages. The Maltese are the smallest nation with the longest history, and their islands are a microcosm, self-contained. Not only has Malta its own tongue. It has its own University—the oldest in the British Commonwealth Overseas and granted the Royal patronage and the prefix "Royal" by King George VI in his coronation year—with seven faculties: Theology, Laws, Medicine and Surgery, Dental Surgery, Engineering and Architecture, Arts, Science. It has, as we have seen, its own Nobility with their Committee of Privileges. It is an ecclesiastical Province whose Archbishop exercises jurisdiction since 1944 over the bishopric of Gozo, previously immediately subject to the Holy See since its formation in 1864. And in the history of this microcosm has been mirrored the life of the great world around it.

Viewed as a part of the British Commonwealth, Malta is unique in two particulars. It is the only British possession whose Government owns an Opera House and in normal times maintains an annual opera season and conducts the pawnbroking of the nation in the manner of certain Continental States.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
GOZO

Comino between them separated from the islet of Cominotto by a channel of the palest green.

Traversing thousands of years, let us next notice a reminder of the rule of Rome in the Latin inscription embedded in the entrance to the citadel, dating from the time when Gozo was a separate *municipium* of the Roman republic. Now for a glimpse of Islam, a legacy of the two centuries—from 870 to 1090—when the Arabs were the lords of these islands. Between the villages of Xewkija and Sannat on the road now called Ta Maimuna was discovered about three hundred years ago a slab of marble bearing an Arabic inscription in Kufic characters. This slab was the tombstone of an Arab girl named Maimuna, and the inscription is not only a fine piece of lapidary work but a human document from which I quote without apology:

> "Ask thyself," cries Maimuna from the grave, "if there is anything everlasting, anything that can repel or cast a spell upon death.
>
> "Alas, death has robbed me of my short life; neither my piety nor my modesty could save me from him. I was industrious in my work, and all that I did is reckoned and remains.
>
> "Oh, thou who lookest upon this grave in which I am enclosed, dust has covered my eyelids and the corners of my eyes.
>
> "On my couch and in my abode there is nought but tears; and [what will happen] when my Creator comes to me?
>
> "Oh, brother, take. . . ."

And here little Maimuna's pathetic message comes to an abrupt end.

The passage of a few more centuries brings us to the spacious days of the Knights of S. John, the study of whose rule in Gozo may be facilitated by reference to the archives of the island's "University," for Gozo had, like Malta, its own "University" until the beginning of British rule.[1] It

[1] These archives were rescued from oblivion after the Second World War by the Commissioner of Gozo, Mr E. Montanaro, and are now preserved in the Commissioner's Office.